Menander's

Dyskolos (Grouch)

translated by Vincent J. Rosivach

cast of characters

stage setting

Pan [*enters from shrine*] Think of this place as a part of Attike — Phyle, to be exact — and the Nymphs' shrine I've come from belongs to the Phylasians and to those who can farm the rocks here — a famous shrine indeed. This farmstead — the one here on the right — Knemon lives there, a man who shuns other men, grouches at everyone, and dislikes crowds. — Did I say "crowds"? This man has lived here a reasonably long time and has gladly talked in his life to no one, has spoken first to no one except — of necessity, since he is a neighbor and passes by — me, Pan. And he immediately regrets it, I'm sure. Anyhow, with a character like this, he still got married. His wife was a widow whose first husband had just died and left her with a son who was very small then. He fought with her not only every day all day but took up the better part of the night as well and lived miserably. A baby daughter came along — even worse. When things were so bad that nothing more could happen, and his life was bitter, pain upon pain, his wife left him and went back to live with her son, the one from her first marriage. He had a little farm, very small, here next door, where he supports — now not very well — his mother, himself, and a single faithful servant whom he inherited from his father. A fine young man the boy is already, with a mind beyond his years: the experience of troubles hastens maturity. Now the old man lives all alone with his

daughter
and a gray-haired serving woman, carrying wood and digging, always working. Beginning with the neighbors here
and his wife all the way down to the people of Kholargos
he hates, one after another, everyone. The girl, however,
has turned out rather like her upbringing,
totally
unfamiliar with anything mean. And those who live here with me
— the Nymphs — she reveres and attentively honors them,
and by so doing she has persuaded us to give some attention
to her. There's a young man whose very rich father
owns farms around here worth many
talents.
He usually spends his time in the city
but he went hunting with someone
and by chance came to this very spot,
where I possessed him to fall in love.
These are the main points. The
details
you will see, if you wish. But do wish,
for I think I see him approaching there
— the man who's in love — together with his friend,
talking with each other about this very subject. [*exits into shrine*]

Kh. [*enters with Sostratos from the direction of town*] What are you saying?
You saw a free girl here
garlanding the Nymphs next door,
Sostratos,
and you immediately came away in love. **So.** Immediately. **Kh.** So fast!
Or had you planned this when you went out, to fall in love with someone?
So. You're making fun of me. Khaireas, I'm bad shape.
Kh. Hey, I believe you. **So.** That's why I've come here and
brought
you along for this enterprise, because I think you're both a friend
and very enterprising. **Kh.** For things like this, Sostratos,
that's what I am. One of my friends brings me along
when he's in love with an *hetaira*. Immediately I grab her and take her off,
— get drunk, burn down the door — I absolutely can't stand
logic.
Instead of finding out all about her, just get her:
moving slowly increases love enormously
but moving quickly means ending quickly.
Now someone talks instead about marriage and a free girl:

I'm someone different there. I inquire about her
family,
finances, character. That way for the rest of time
I leave my friend a reminder of me and
how I managed these things. **So.** And very well,
([*aside*] but not at all suitably for me). **Kh.** And now at least, since I haven't
before,
I've got to hear this completely through. **So.** Early this
morning
I myself sent Pyrrhias, who had gone hunting with me,
from home — **Kh.** To whom? **So.** To the father himself
of the girl ... to meet him, or the head
of the household, whoever it is. **Kh.** Herakles,
what are you saying? **So.** I made a mistake: a
slave
wasn't the right person perhaps for something like this. But it isn't easy
when you're in love to see the whole picture and know what's right.
And the delay ... I'm amazed he's been there for so long.
I told him to come straight home
once he found out about things
here.
Py. [*enters from the direction of Kn.'s fields*] Let me through, watch out,
everybody get out of the way.
He's crazy, the guy who's chasing me, crazy. **So.** What's this, boy?
Py. Run away. **So.** What is it? **Py.** Dirt, stones ... thrown at me.
I'm done for. **So.** Thrown at you? Where? You're crazy. **Py.** He isn't still
chasing me? **So.** By Zeus. **Py.** But I thought he was. **So.**
What
are you saying? **Py.** Let's get out of here, I'm begging you. **So.** Where?
Py. From the door here, as far as possible.
A son of distress, either he's been driven mad by some god
or he's naturally crazy, the man who lives
in that house, the one you send me
to.
Damn! My toes, I've shattered
nearly all of them banging into things.
(**So.** [*aside to Khaireas*] He's come here and gotten drunk.
Kh. Clearly.) **Py.** By Zeus, I'd rather be completely wiped out,
Sostratos, and destroyed. Keep up your
guard.
— I can't speak. I'm out of
breath — OK, I knocked on the door of the house

and said I was looking for the head of the house. Someone came out to me,
a miserable old woman, right here where I'm standing now
talking to you. She pointed him out to me on the crest of the
ridge
there, going around collecting his damned pears — or a lot of
trouble for himself. **Kh.** How angrily!
Why, my good man? **Py.** I entered his land,
proceeded towards him, and very much
from a distance — wishing to be very
friendly
and tactful — I spoke to him and
"I've come to you, father, about something," I say, "to see you about
something,
to propose a piece of business in your interest." Right away
"Damn you," he says, "On my land?
You have come on my land? What's the idea?" He picks up a lump of
dirt,
throws it right in my face.
Kh. Damn him. **Py.** And while I was saying "But Poseidon damn you"
I shut my eyes and he grabbed some stake or something again.
He cleaned my clock with it over and over, saying "What business do you
and I
have? Don't you know the public
road?",
screeching as loud as he could. **Kh.** He's completely crazy,
that farmer you're describing. **Py.** The ending: So I'm running away
and he's chased me for maybe fifteen *stadia*,
first around the ridge, then down this way
to this clump of trees, slinging lumps of dirt,
stones,
the pears when he didn't have anything else.
Wild business totally, damned
old man. I'm begging you, get out of here. **So.** You're talking cowardice.
Py. You don't know what kind of trouble there is here. He'll eat
us up. **Kh.** Perhaps maybe this person happens to be somewhat distressed
now. For that reason I think it's best to postpone
approaching him, Sostratos. Rest assured,
for every piece of business the most businesslike thing is
to choose the right moment. **Py.** You two, please have some sense. **Kh.** It's
a very bitter thing
a poor farmer is, not just this one

but nearly all. But tomorrow when it's light
I'll go to him myself alone, since now I know
the house. And now you go home
yourself and pass the time there. This will turn out alright. [*exits toward city*]
Py. Let's do as he says. **So.** He's glad to have found an
excuse.
It was immediately clear that he wasn't happy
walking with me, and that he didn't approve at all
of my marriage attempt. But you, wicked you,
I hope that all the gods destroy you.
Py. What did I do wrong, Sostratos?
So. Clearly you were doing some damage to his farm,
stealing something. **Py.** me stealing? **So.** But someone was thrashing you
when you weren't doing anything wrong? **Py.** And this man's here
himself. I'm out of here, sir. You talk to him. [*exits toward city*]
So. I wouldn't be able. I'm always
unconvincing
in conversation. What sort of thing to say?
His look doesn't seem totally friendly to me,
by Zeus. How serious he is! I'll move away
from the door. It's better. But he's even shouting
while he's walking by himself. He doesn't look sane to
me.
By Apollo and the gods, of course I'm afraid
of him: why not tell the truth?
Kn. [*enters from the direction of his fields*] Then wasn't that Perseus blessed in
two
ways, that he grew wings
and avoided everyone walking on the
ground,
then that he possessed such a fine possession with which
he turned to stone everyone who annoyed him? I wish
I could get that for myself now, because nothing would be more abundant
than stone statues everywhere.
Now life is unlivable, by Asklepios.
They talk and come on my land
now. Alongside the road, by Zeus,
that's where I usually waste my time, I suppose! Why, I don't even work

that part of the farm: I've run away
because of the passers-by. But up to the ridges up
there
they chase after me now. Oh the overpopulous crowd!
Aargh! Once again someone is standing over there
by our door. (**So.** [*aside*] Will he hit me?)
Kn. It's impossible to find a place to be alone anywhere,
not even if it happens you want to hang
yourself.
So. ([*aside*] Is he angry at me?) I'm waiting around, father, for someone here. We made an appointment. **Kn.** Didn't I say it?
Have you people made up your mind this is a stoa or the shrine of Leos?
In front of my house, if you want to see someone,
that's where you arrange to meet!
Absolutely,
and build a seat, if you have any sense,
or better yet a bunch of them for your meetings. Poor me!
Getting in other people's ways, that's the trouble, it seems to me. [*exits into his house*]
So. Not ordinary effort, it seems to me,
is what this business needs, but something more
intense.
It's clear. Shall I go then
To Getas, my father's slave? By the gods,
I will. He's got something fiery about him,
and he's experienced in all kinds of business.
He'll push all that man's grouchiness away, I know
it.
As for letting this business lie for a while,
I reject the idea. Many things could happen in a single day.
But I hear someone at the door.
Gi. [*enters from Knemon's house*] Oh, poor me, what troubles I've got!
What will I do now? My nanny was pulling up the bucket
and she let it fall into the well. (**So.** [*aside*] O Zeus Father
and Healer Phoibos, o dear Dioskoroi,
Such irresistible beauty!) **Gi.** He ordered me to get some warm water ready, daddy did, when he was going out. (**So.** [*addressing audience*] Men, what a marvel!)
Gi. If he finds out about this, he'll
beat her to death. No time for wasted words.

Dearest Nymphs, I've got to take the water from you.
I'm embarrassed, if there are people sacrificing
inside, to trouble ... **So.** But if you will give it to me,
I will dip the vessel in the water for you and come back with it
immediately.
Gi. Yes, by the gods: hurry. (**So.** [*aside*] Quite ladylike
for a country girl. O much-honored gods,
which of the spirits would save me now? [*exits into shrine*]) **Gi.** Poor me,
Who made that noise? Is daddy coming?
Then I'll get a beating if he catches me
outside. **Da.** [*enters from Gorgias' house, speaking back into house*] I've spent a
long time doing chores for you
here while he's digging by himself. I've got to go
to him. Oh you most miserable thing,
Poverty, why have we found you as much as we have?
Why for so long like this do you
continually
sit inside and live with us? **So.** [*enters from shrine*] Take
this. **Gi.** Bring it here. **Da.** What ever does this
person want? **So.** Farewell. [*the girl exits into Knemon's house*]
Oh, damn it. Stop whining, Sostratos:
it'll be OK. **Da.** OK? what will be OK? **So.** Don't be
afraid,
but what you were going to do just now — get Getas
and come back with him once you've told him everything clearly. [*exits towards Kallippides' house*]
Da. What ever is this trouble? I don't like at all
this business. A young man doing chores
for a girl: bad. But damned you,
Knemon,
I hope all the gods destroy you.
An innocent girl and you leave her alone by herself,
provide no protection as you should have.
When he found this out, maybe
this man sneaked up, thinking it some
lucky find. Surely not, but I'd better
tell her brother as quick as I can about this, so
we can watch out for the girl.
I think I'll go and do it now.
I see these worshippers of Pan coming

here to this place. They look a little drunk:
it's not the time, I think, to bother them. [*exits toward Gorgias' farm*]

CHORAL SONG

Go. [*enters with Daos*] Just like that, like something unimportant ... tell me, this business,
you handled it so lightly? **Da.** How? **Go.** By Zeus, you should
have seen the man approaching the girl, Daos, whoever he was,
then, immediately, and told him how that's one thing in the future
no one will ever see him
do again. Now, just like it was someone else's
business, you stood back. It's not possible, I suppose, to escape
blood ties, Daos. My sister still matters
to me. Her father wants to be a stranger
as far as we're concerned: his grouchiness is something
we shouldn't imitate, for if she should fall into something shameful
the disgrace would also become mine:
someone from outside doesn't know who's responsible
but he does know what happened.
Let's knock. **Da.** Sir ... the old man, Gorgias,
I'm afraid of him. If he catches me going toward his door
he'll hang me right away. **Go.** He's hard to handle, I suppose,
fighting when he doesn't have to. I don't know either how
someone would force him to the better
or change his mind with advice.
But as for forcing him he's got the law firmly with him,
and as for persuading him, he's got his personality.
Da. Hold on a second: we haven't come in vain.
But just as I said, he's turned around and he's coming back again.
Go. The man with the expensive cloak? Is this the one you mean?
Da. Exactly. **Go.** Someone who's up to no good: you can see immediately from his expression.
So. [*enters on stage*] I didn't catch Getas at home.
Mother is going to sacrifice to some god —

I don't know which — she does this everyday,
she goes around the district in a circle sacrificing ...
the whole district — she sent him off
to hire a cook from around here. I've passed
on the sacrifice and come back to things here.
And I think I'll put aside all this strolling about
and speak myself on my own behalf. But I'll knock on the door
so I can't stop and think about it any more.
Go. Young man, would you wish to abide
a rather serious word from me? **So.** And quite happily.
Speak.
Go. I myself think that there is for all men,
both those who are prospering and those doing badly,
some sort of limit to this and some change:
and for the one who is prospering that thus far
the things of life remain on the right
track
for however much time he is able to bear his good luck
and does nothing bad. But whenever he comes to this,
led on by his goods, there, I suppose,
he gets a change for the worse;
but for those who are needy, if they do nothing
bad
while they are poor but nobly bear
their luck and come to some trust in the course of time,
they expect there will be some better share.
What then am I saying? Do not yourself, if you are very rich,
trust in this, and as for beggars like us, again
don't look down on us, but to the people who see you
always show yourself worthy of continuing prosperity.
So. Do I seem to you to be doing something out of place?
Go. You seem to me to have set your heart on a base deed,
thinking you would persuade a young girl to go
astray,
— a free girl — or watching for some suitable moment
you would do something worthy of many deaths.
So. Apollo! **Go.** It is not right at least
that your leisure become trouble
for us who have no leisure. And of all things, know

that
a beggar who has been wronged is the most irritable thing.
First of all he is an object of pity, then he takes
the things he has suffered not as injustice but as arrogance.
So. Young man, bless you: listen to me a bit —
Da. Bravo, master! Many
blessings! **So.** — and you, the one who speaks before knowing.
I saw a girl here. I am in love with her.
If you call this an injustice, perhaps I have done something unjust.
For what might someone say? Except that I come here
not to her, but I wish to see her
father. For I, being free,
having a sufficient income, I am ready to take
her as my bride without a dowry, and I add a pledge to spend the rest of my life
loving her. But if I have come here with a view to evil
or wishing to plan some harm against you and your family
secretly
let Pan here, young man, and the Nymphs with him
strike me senseless right here next to the house
now. I am troubled, you can be sure,
extremely troubled, if this is the kind of person I seem to you.
Go. But if I perhaps spoke myself more strongly than I should have,
don't let it upset you any longer,
for you've changed my mind about these things and you have me as a friend.
It is not as an outsider but as the girl's brother
from the same mother, sir, that I say these things to you.
So. And you will be useful, by Zeus, in the future to me.
Go. Useful? How? **So.** I see you are generous by nature.
Go. I don't want to send you off with an empty excuse,
but to make clear how things are. She has a father
like no human has ever been, neither in the past
nor in our days. **So.** The difficult one —
I know what you mean. **Go.** This trouble goes too far.
He owns this farm here, worth may-be two talents.
He keeps farming it himself

by himself, with no one to work with him,
not a servant from the house, not a hired man from the neighborhood,
not a neighbor, but himself by himself.
The sweetest thing for him is to see no human being.
While he's working he keeps the girl with him
mostly; he talks only to her,
which he wouldn't do easily to anyone else.
Then he says he will give her in marriage — when
he finds a son-in-law with the same character he has. **So.** You mean,
never. **Go.** Don't give yourself troubles, sir,
for you'll have them in vain. Let us, his kin,
bear these things since luck has given them to us.
So. By the gods, have you never fallen in love with someone,
young man. **Go.** It's not possible for me, sir. **So.** How so?
Who's stopping you? **Go.** The calculation of my present troubles,
which doesn't give me a break — none
whatsoever.
So. You don't seem to have. At least you talk like someone rather
inexperienced
about these things. You tell me to stand aside:
to do so is no longer up to me, but to god. **Go.** And so
you do us no wrong, but you are suffering troubles in vain.
So. Not if I should get the girl. **Go.** You wouldn't get her.
Well then, follow along together with me
and stand next to me. He works the glen
next to us. **So.** Why? **Go.** I will put in a word
about the girl's marriage, something like this
I'd gladly see happen myself.
He immediately fights against everybody, scolding
them
for the lives they lead. If he catches sight of you at your
leisure like some pampered child he won't put up with even seeing you.
So. Is he there now? **Go.** By Zeus, rather in a little while
he'll go out by his usual way. **So.** Sir, the girl,
are you saying he'll bring her with him? **Go.** However
it
happens. **So.** Walk — I'm ready — to where you say.
But I beg you, help me in the struggle. **Go.** In what way?

So. In what way? Let's proceed to where you say he is. **Da.** What then? While we're working are you going to stand next to us with your fine cloak? **So.** Why ever not? **Da.** He will throw those clumps of dirt
immediately at you and he'll call you a lazy pest. But you've got to dig with us. For if he should happen to see this,
perhaps he'd tolerate some word even from you
because he thought you were a working farmer, by your way of life a poor man. **So.** I am ready to obey all commands. Go ahead.

Go. Why do you force yourself to suffer? (**Da.** [*aside*] I hope
we work as much as possible today
and this guy throws out his back
and stops bothering us and coming here.)
So. Bring out a mattock. **Da.** Take this one from me and go on.

I'll work on building the stone fence for a while
myself. That too has to be done. **So.** Give it to me.
You've saved me. **Da.** I'm on my way, lad. Follow me there. [*exits toward Gorgias' farm*]
So. So it is for me: I must all but die now
or have the girl and live. **Go.** If in fact you are
saying
what you're thinking, I hope you get it. [*exits toward his farm*] **So.** O much-honored gods!
The arguments which you use to turn me away, as you think, my friend,
have made me twice as sharp for this business.
For if the girl has not been raised among women
and knows nothing of the bad things

in this life, and hasn't been frightened by some aunt
or grandmother, but has grown up somewhat as a lady would,
with a fierce father whose character is to hate evil,
how would getting this woman not be a blessing?
But this mattock weighs four talents:

it will kill me first. All the same, no softening
once I've gotten down to working at this business. [*exits toward Gorgias' farm*]

Sik. [*enters from the opposite direction*] This sheep is not an everyday beauty. ([*to sheep*] Go to hell!) If I lift it and carry it

up high, it holds on to an olive shoot with its
mouth,
it eats the fig leaves, it violently twists away.
If you let it loose on the ground it won't move along.
So the opposite has happened to what you'd expect. I,
the cook, have been made mincemeat by this sheep, dragging it along the road.
But luckily this is the Nymphs' shrine
where we will sacrifice. Hail Pan. Getas boy,
left so far behind? **Ge.** [*enters on stage*] Four
mules' worth, that's the cargo these damned, damned women tied on me
to carry. **Sik.** There's some large crowd coming,
it would seem. It's indescribable how many
rugs
you're carrying. **Ge.** What do I do now? **Sik.** Lean those things here. **Ge.** There!
If she sees Pan in a dream, the one
in Paiania, we'll immediately walk there, I'm sure,
to sacrifice to him. **Sik.** Who has seen a dream?
Ge. Man, don't wear me out. **Sik.** All the same, speak,
Getas.
Ge. The woman who owns me. **Sik.** What, by the gods?
Ge. You'll kill me. She thought Pan — **Sik.** You're talking about this one?
Ge. This one — **Sik.** Was doing what? **Ge.** For the young master Sostratos —
Sik. An elegant young man too — **Ge.** that Pan was hammering fetters around his feet.
Sik. Apollo! **Ge.** Then he gave him a leather jacket and
a mattock and ordered him to dig on the farm next door.
Sik. Strange. **Ge.** But we are sacrificing
because of this, that it will turn out better than she fears.
Sik. I understand. Lift this up again now and carry it
inside. Let's get some reclining places prepared inside
and get everything else ready. Nothing should hinder their
sacrificing when they come. But good luck to them.
And relax those eyebrows, you triply miserable man.
I'll fatten you the way you like today.
Ge. I've always been a fan of you and your craft

425
— but I still don't trust you at all. [*they exit into the shrine*]

CHORAL SONG

Kn. [*enters from his house*] Old woman, lock the door and don't open it for anyone
until I myself come back here again.
That will be when it's completely dark, I
imagine.
Mo. [*enters with retinue from the direction of Kallippides' house*] Plangon, move more quickly. 430
We should have finished sacrificing by now. **Kn.** What does this trouble mean?
Some crowd. Go to hell! **Mo.** Play your pipes, Parthenis,
Pan's song. This god, they say,
should not be approached in silence. **Ge.** [*enters from shrine*] By Zeus, you're all safe.
Kn. Herakles, how disgusting! **Ge.** We've been
sitting 435
for so long, waiting around. **Mo.** Is everything
ready for us? **Ge.** By Zeus!
The sheep at any rate — it's almost dead, the poor thing —
it isn't waiting your leisure. But go inside.
The baskets, have them handy ... wash basins, *thulemata*.
440
Ge. What are you gaping at, you thunderstruck fool? [*all but Knemon exit into the shrine*]
Kn. Damned you, damned you. They
keep me from working because I can't leave the house alone.
The Nymphs are trouble for me
continually since they live next door, so that I think
I'll 445
build a new house and tear this one down
to get away from here. The way these thieves sacrifice:
they bring food boxes, jugs of wine ... not for the gods
but for themselves. Incense is pious,
so is a flat cake. This the god takes —
450
all of it — when it is put on the fire. But these people, they put the tailbone and the gallbladder on the fire — since they are inedible — for the gods,

and they gobble down the rest themselves. Old woman,
quickly open the door. We should do
the inside work, I think. [*exits into his house*]

Ge. [*enters, speaking back into the shrine*] The pot, you say, you forgot. Are you people complete
drunks sleeping off a hangover? And what will we do now?
I'll have to bother the god's neighbors,
it seems. [*knocks on Knemon's door*] Boy! [*to himself*] By the gods,
I don't think there's a more pathetic bunch of little servant girls
being raised anywhere. They don't know how to do anything except
screw around — [*knocks again*] Nice boys! —
[*to himself*] and tell tales if someone sees. [*knocks again*] Little boy!
[*to himself*] What the hell is this? [*knocks again*] Boy! [*to himself*] There isn't a single person
inside. Uh-oh. It seems that someone is running toward the door.
Kn. [*opens his door*] Why are you hanging on to the door, you triply miserable person, tell me,
man. **Ge.** Don't bite! **Kn.** I will, by Zeus,
and I'll eat you alive. **Ge.** No, by the gods!
Kn. What business, you scoundrel, do I have
with you. **Ge.** No business. And in fact
I haven't come to demand back a loan from you and I don't have
witnesses to some summons, but I've come to ask for a cooking pot.
Kn. A cooking pot? **Ge.** A cooking pot. **Kn.** You worthless slave,
do you think I sacrifice oxen and do the same things
you and your people do? **Ge.** I don't think you'd even sacrifice a snail.
But farewell, good man. They told me to knock on the door,
the women did, and to ask.
I did it. There isn't any: I'll report that back
when I go to them. *[to himself as he exits into the shrine*] O much-honored gods,
a gray-haired snake he is, this man.
Kn. Man-killing wild beasts! Right away, just like going to a friend,
they knock. If I catch somebody coming toward our door,
if I don't make him an example to everyone in this place,
consider me as no better than a nobody.

This one now doesn't know how
485
lucky he's been, whoever he was. [*exits into his house*]

Sik. [*enters from shrine, speaking to Getas still inside*] Damned you! He chewed you out? Maybe
you spoke to him like the shit-eater you are when you asked him. Some people
don't know how to do something like this. I myself have discovered the art of doing it.
I cater to tens of thousands of people in the
city 490
and I bother their neighbors and take
equipment from all of them. You need to be flattering
if you need something. An older man answers the door.
Right away I call me "father" and "daddy";
an old woman, "mother." If it's some middle-aged
woman, 495
I call her "priestess." If one of the servants,
"my good man." [*speaking in the direction of the shrine*] But you people can go hang.
[*to himself*] Oh how ignorant, just calling out "boy, little boy."
[*knocks on Knemon's door*] It's me. Come out, dear little father. I want to talk with you.
Kn. [*opening his door*] You again? **Sik.** Huh, what's this? **Kn.** You're getting me angry as if 500
on purpose. Didn't I tell
you
not to come toward the door. Give me the lash, old woman. **Sik.** Never, but let me go! **Kn.** "Let me go?" **Sik.** My good man, by the gods!
Kn. Come back here. **Sik.** Poseidon damn you. **Kn.** And you're still chattering?
Sik. I came to ask you for an earthenware pot. **Kn.** I don't have an earthenware pot 505
or a cleaver or salt
or vinegar or anything else, but I've told all the people in this place
quite simply not to come here.
Sik. You didn't tell me. **Kn.** But I'm telling you now.
Sik. And it will mean trouble for you. But tell
me, 510
you wouldn't even say where someone could go and get one. **Kn.** Didn't I tell you?
Will you still keep chattering to me? **Sik.** Fare thee well. **Kn.** I don't want

any farewells from any one of you. **Sik.** Then don't fare well.
Kn. Oh these incurable troubles. [*exits into his house*] **Sik.** Fine way
he's plowed me over. What a thing it is to ask
skillfully!
Makes a difference, by Zeus! Shall one go to another door?
But if they are so ready to practice boxing in this place,
it'll be hard. Is it better for me
to roast all the meat? It seems so.
I've got a baking dish. Farewell I say
to the Phylasians. I'll use the things I have. [*exits into shrine*]

So. [*returning from Gorgias' field*] Whoever has run out of troubles, let him come
hunting in Phyle! Oh triply cursed, the way I feel
in my back, my stomach, my throat — in a word,
in my whole body! For I immediately got down to work, very much
a young man, so to speak, and raising
the mattock vigorously, as if I were a workman, I kept striking deep into the ground.
I put myself into it as if I loved labor — not for long.
Then I also kept turning around a bit, trying to see when
the old man would come bringing the girl with him.
And by Zeus, each time I gripped
my lower back, secretly at first ... how long
this all was ... I began to arch my back
but I was quietly becoming stiff as a board. No one was coming.
The sun was burning me up. Gorgias kept looking over
and see me, just like a well arm,
barely rising up, then with my whole body
bending down again. "It doesn't seem to me now," he said,
"that he will come, young man." "What do we do then," I said immediately,
"Tomorrow shall we watch
for him and let it go for now?" Daos was there
to be my successor in the digging. And so the first
approach turned out like that. I've come here,
why I can't say, by the gods,
but the business drags me unbidden to this place.

Ge. [*enters from shrine, speaking to Sikon within*] What's the problem? You think I have sixty hands,
man? I blow on the coals till they glow for you;
I take, I carry, I wash, I cut up the animal's innards — all at the same time.
I knead the dough; I carry around the pottery, by Pan here,
and I get completely blinded by the smoke for these
people.
I really seem to be celebrating the feast! **So.** Getas, boy.
Ge. Who's calling me? **So.** I am. **Ge.** And who are you? **So.** Don't you see? **Ge.** I see.
The young master. **So.** What are you doing here? Tell me. **Ge.** "What?" you ask.
We've just now finished sacrificing and we're preparing
a lunch for you people. **So.** Is my mother here? **Ge.** For a while now.
So. And my father? **Ge.** We're waiting for him. But come join them.
So. After I've run an errand. That the sacrifice is precisely here
has turned out to be quite convenient. For I'll bring along
the young man, going just as I am,
and his servant. Once they've
shared
in sacrificial meals, for the future they'll be more useful
for us as allies in the matter of the wedding.
Ge. What are you saying? You're going to go and bring some people for lunch?
As far as I'm concerned there might as well be three thousand
of you. I knew this myself long ago,
that
I'll not get a taste of anything. Where would I get it from? Bring together
everyone. You've sacrificed a beautiful animal, absolutely,
worth seeing. But would these womenfolk
— for they are so polite — would they give a share of anything?
Not even, by Demeter, a share of bitter salt. **So.** It will be
fine
today, Getas. I prophesy
this myself, Pan ... but in truth I will pray to you
every time I go past you — and I shall be a friend to my fellow man. [*exits toward Gorgias' field*]
Sim. [*enters from Knemon's house, at first not noticing Getas*] O unlucky! o unlucky! o unlucky!
Ge. [*aside*] Go to hell: some woman belonging to the old
man

has come out. **Sim.** What will happen to me? The bucket,
I wanted to get it out of the well myself
— if somehow I could — without my master finding out about it.
So I tied his mattock to some weak
small rope ... it was rotten and broke on
me
right away. **Ge.** good! **Sim.** Poor me, I let
the mattock fall into the well together with the bucket.
Ge. What's left is for you to throw yourself in too.
Sim. Unluckily he means to shift about the dung that's lying inside,
and for a long time now he's been running
around
looking for the mattock and shouting — I hear him at the door.
Ge. Run away, you miserable thing, run away. He'll kill you, old woman.
Or rather, defend yourself. **Kn.** [*enters from his house*] Where is the thief?
Sim. I didn't mean to throw it in, master. **Kn.** Go now
inside. **Sim.** What are you going to do? Tell me. **Kn.**
Me?
I'll tie you up and lower you into the well — **Sim.** No! Oh miserable —
Kn. with this same rope, by the gods.
Ge. That's the best if it really is completely rotten.
Sim. Shall I call Daos from the neighbors'?
Kn. You'll call Daos, you villain, after you've completely ruined
me?
Haven't I been telling you? Quickly, go inside. [*Simikhe exits into Knemon's house*] **Kn.** Poor
me, poor me, now that I'm all by myself ...
not a single person. I'll go down into the well. What else
is there to do? **Ge.***[to Knemon*] Our people will provide a grapple hook
and a rope. **Kn.** You pest, I hope the
gods
— all of them — destroy you if you say anything to me. [*exits into his house*]
Ge. And quite justly! He's jumped inside again.
Oh this thrice-cursed man! Such a life he lives!
This is a pure Attic farmer:
fighting against rocks that grow only wild thyme and
sage,
he wins aches and pains for himself and gets nothing good out of it.
But here's the young master coming this way,
bringing his guests with him. They're some workmen
from this place. How out of place!
Why is he bringing these people here now? or

where
did he get to know them? *[exits into shrine]*

So. [*enters with Gorgias and Daos*] I wouldn't allow you
to do otherwise. We have everything. Herakles!
does anybody at all refuse this,
to come to lunch when a friend has
sacrificed?
For I've been — you should know this precisely — I've been a friend of yours for a long time now,
before I saw you. Take these things, Daos, and carry them inside our house,
then come back. **Go.** No, not a all. Don't leave mother alone
at home but tend to her,
whatever she needs. I'll be there myself soon. [*exits with Sostratos to shrine, Daos exits to Gorgias' house*]

CHORAL SONG

Sim. [*enters from Knemon's house*] Who'd help? Oh, poor me!
Who'd help? **Sik.** [*enters from shrine*] Lord Herakles,
leave us alone, by the gods and spirits,
to make our libations. You people insult, you beat,
you wail away — What a strange household!
Sim. My master's in the well. **Sik.** How? **Sim.**
How?
In order to get the mattock and the bucket out ...
he was climbing down, and then he slipped and
has fallen to the bottom. **Sik.** Isn't this the very difficult old man?
He's done well, by Heaven!
Dearest old woman, now it's your job. **Sim.**
How?
Sik. A mortar or some stone or something like this,
take it and throw it in from up above. **Sim.** Most dear man,
climb down. **Sik.** Poseidon! In order to experience the point of the saying,
I'm to fight with a dog in the well? No
way.
Sim. Gorgias, where in the world are you? **Go.** [*enters from shrine*] Where in the world am I?
What is it, Simikhe? **Sim.** What do you mean "What"? I'll say it again:

My master's in the well. **Go.** Sostratos,
Come out here. [*So. enters from shrine*] **Sim.** You lead, go inside quickly.
[*they exit to Kn.'s house*]
Sik. [*alone on stage, addressing the audience*] There are gods, by Dionysos.
You don't give
a pot to people who are sacrificing, you temple-
robber,
but begrudge it. Drink the well dry now that you've fallen into it,
so you don't have to share even water with anyone.
Now the Nymphs have taken their revenge
against you on my behalf, rightly so. Not a single person
who has done wrong to a cook ever completely escapes
unharmed.
Our craft is suitable to the gods, so to speak.
Against the busboy, however, do what you wish.
But certainly he isn't dead? Some female is crying "daddy dearest"
and wailing away. No way did I want this.

(about four lines are missing here, and the next two are too fragmentary to restore)

[*speaking to audience*] The sight of him ...
what do you think it will be like? By the gods, dunked in the water,
shivering? An elegant sight! I myself would gladly
see it, men, by Apollo here.
[*speaking into shrine*] You women, offer libations on behalf of these
people.
Pray that the old man be rescued — badly,
maimed, a cripple. For that way he becomes
a most painless neighbor to this god
and to the people who are continually sacrificing here. This concerns me,
if anyone will ever hire me. [*exits into shrine*]

So. [*enters from Knemon's house and addresses audience*] Men, by Demeter, by
Asklepios,
by the gods, never in my life
has a person more conveniently drowned
— almost. What a sweet way to pass the time!
For Gorgias, as soon as we went
in,
immediately jumped down into the well, while I and
the child up above were doing nothing — for what
were we going to do? — except she was pulling her hair,
she was crying, she was beating her breast,

while I, the golden boy, just as if, by the
gods,
I were her nanny, I stood next to her, I begged her not to do
this, I pleaded with her — meanwhile looking at a delight
that was not at all ordinary. As for the man who had been battered about down below,
he mattered less than anything, except for constantly
pulling on him — this really bothered
me.
In fact I almost destroyed him,
for the rope, while I was looking at the girl,
I let it go maybe three times. But Gorgias was a Atlas,
and not an ordinary one at that: he held on and little by little eventually
he succeeded in carrying him up. When he got out of the
well
I left them and here I am, for I can no longer
restrain myself, but I almost
went up to the girl and kissed her, so fiercely
do I love her. I'm getting ready now — I hear them at the door.
Zeus Savior, what an odd
sight!
Go. [*see note*] Do you want anything, Knemon? Tell me. **Kn.** What should I say?
I'm in poor shape. **Go.** Cheer up. **Kn.** I already have.
Knemon won't annoy you people any more in the future.
Go. This is the kind of trouble when you're all alone,
do you see? Now you almost perished just
then.
Having someone to keep an eye on you at your age,
that's how you should live out your life now. **Kn.** I'm in bad shape, I know,
but call your mother, Gorgias,
as quickly as possible. [*Gorgias exits to his house*] Only trouble knows how to teach us,
so it seems. Little
daughter,
hold on to me, please, and help me stand up. **So.** Lucky
man! **Kn.** [*apparently to Sostratos*] Why are you standing there, you miserable person?

(about five lines are missing, and the next three and a half are too fragmentary to restore)

[*during the missing lines Gorgias returns with his mother Myrrhine; the text resumes with* ***Knemon*** *speaking*] ... nor could any one of you
persuade me to change my mind about this, but you will go along with my decision.
In one thing perhaps I erred, that alone of all people I thought
I was somehow self-sufficient and would need no one.
Now I have seen that the end of life is sharp and
unforeseeable,
and I've found that I did not know this well back then.
There needs to be — and be close by — someone who will always help out.
But by Hephaistos — I so completely messed myself up
seeing the different ways people lived and their calculations, the way
they directed them toward gain — I thought no
one
would ever be kindly minded one to another, not one out of all of them.
This then
was what stood in my way. With difficulty one person gave me proof now,
Gorgias, who has done a most noble man's deed.
For the person who didn't allow him even to approach my door,
and who never gave him help for
anything,
who never greeted him first, who never spoke gladly with him — he saved me all the same.
Another person might have said — and quite justly — "you didn't allow me to approach:
I'm not approaching. You've never been helpful to us:
nor will I be to you now." What is it, young man? Whether I
will die now — I think I will: I'm probably in bad shape
—
or if I'm saved, I make you my son, and whatever I happen to have,
all of it consider yours. I entrust this girl to you:
get her a husband. For even if I were completely well, I'd
never be able to find one myself, since no one would ever satisfy me.
But if I will live, let me live as I
wish;
you take over the rest and run it yourself. You have a mind, by the grace of the gods;
it seems right that you be your sister's guardian. From my property
measure out and give half as her dowry,
and take the other half yourself and look after me and your mother.

But lay me down, daughter. To say more than what's necessary
I don't think is appropriate for a man. Except know this, child —
for I wish to tell you a little about me and my character —
if everyone were like me there wouldn't be law courts,
and they wouldn't take them away to prisons,
and there wouldn't be wars, but having goods in measure each man would be happy.
But perhaps those things are more pleasing. Act that way.
This difficult and grouchy old man will be out of your way.
Go. But I accept all this. Still with your help we must
as quickly as possible find a groom for the girl, if you agree.
Kn. Hey, I've told you all that I had in mind. Don't bother me, by the gods.
Go. For someone wants to meet you — **Kn.** No how, by the gods!
Go. — asking for the girl — **Kn.** Something like that no longer concerns me.
Go. — the one who helped save you. **Kn.** Which one? **Go.** This one here. Come over here, you.
Kn. He's sun-burned. Is he a farmer? **Go.** And very much so, father.
He's not spoiled, nor is the lazy sort to stroll around all day long.

(the next two lines are too fragmentary to restore; the following three lines are incomplete)

Kn. Roll me inside.
Go. And you, take care of him. [see note] **So.** As for what's left, you must betroth
your sister to me. **Go.** Refer these things, Sostratos, to your father.
So. My father won't oppose me in anything. **Go.** Then I
betroth her, I give her to you, in the presence of all the gods.
It's the right thing to do, Sostratos,
for you didn't come to this business with a made-up character,
but simply, and you thought everything was worth doing for the sake of the marriage.
Even if you were a softy, you took the mattock, you dug,
you were willing to work. In this part he most shows himself a man,
whoever tolerates making himself equal to another,
rich to poor. For this man will bear a change of fortune
with self-control. You have given a sufficient proof of your character.

I wish only that you remain as you are. **So.** And much better still.
But to praise oneself is tiresome business perhaps.
[*sees father approaching from off stage*] But conveniently I see my father here.
Go. Kallippides
is your father? **So.** Absolutely. **Go.** By Zeus, a rich man,
and rightly so, since he is an unbeatable farmer. **Ka.** I've been left out
perhaps.
They've eaten up the sheep by now and have long ago gone
back
to the farm. **Go.** Poseidon! Looks like he has a sharp hunger.
Shall we tell him these things immediately? **So.** First let him have lunch.
He'll be tamer. **Ka.** What's this, Sostratos? Have you had lunch already?
So. But something's left for you. Go on in. **Ka.** That's what I'm doing.
[*enters into shrine*]
Go. Go inside and talk now, if you wish, to your
father
by yourselves. **So.** Will you wait about inside your house? **Go.** I won't go
out. **So.** In a little while then I'll call you over here myself. [*So. exits to shrine, Go. to Kn.'s house*]

CHORAL SONG

So. [*enters with Kallippides from shrine*] All things have not turned out as I
wished for myself, father,
nor are they the way I expected they would be from you. **Ka.** How
so?
Haven't I gone along with your wishes? That you marry the one you love,
I both wish it and say that it should be. **So.** You don't seem to me to.
Ka. By the gods, I do too, since I know that
for a young man marriage becomes stable in this way,
if because of love he is convinced to do
so.
So. Then myself, I will marry the sister
of the young man, because I think he is worthy
of us. How do you feel about this now?
Will you not give him my sister in return? **Ka.** A shameful thing to say.
I don't want to take on a bride and a bridegroom who are both
beggars:
one is enough for us.
So. You're talking about money, an unstable business.
If you think that all of this will stay with you

for all time, guard it, share with no one
what you own. But what you're not yourself master
of
— and everything you have is not yours but luck's —
don't begrudge any of these things, father, to anyone.
For luck herself will take everything of yours for herself
and assign them again to some one else, perhaps someone who doesn't
deserve it.
That's why I say to you, for as
long
as you are master, you must use what you have in a noble fashion, father;
yourself, you must help out everyone, make rich
as many people as you can by your own efforts. For this act
never dies. And if you ever happen to stumble,
the same will be there for you from what you've
done.
A much better thing is a visible friend
than invisible wealth which you keep buried away.
Ka. You know how it is, Sostratos. What I've accumulated
I'm not going to bury with me. How could I?
It's yours. You wish to make
someone
a friend now that you've tested him. Do it, and good luck!
Why are you quoting me moral maxims? Go, provide,
give, share. I've been completely convinced by you —
gladly. **So.**Gladly? **Ka.** You can be sure. Don't let any of this
upset you. **So.** I'll call Gorgias
then.
Go. [*enters from Knemon's house*] I've listened to you at the door as I was
coming out,
I heard every word you both have said since the beginning.
What then? I accept you, Sostratos, to be my friend,
and an excellent one at that, and I am extraordinarily pleased.
But business that's bigger than I am, I don't want
it,
and even if I did, I couldn't bear it.
So. I don't know what you're saying. **Go.** The sister, my sister,
I give her to you as a wife. But to marry yours —
I'm fine as it is. **So.** What do you mean, "fine"? **Go.** It's not pleasant
to be spoiled by other people's efforts, it seems to
me,
but only when I've gathered it myself. **So.** You're talking nonsense,

Gorgias.
You judge yourself unworthy of the marriage?
Go. I have judged myself to be worthy of her,
but not worthy to take much when I have little.
Ka. By Zeus the Greatest, nobly said, I
suppose
but you're still crazy. **Go.** How? **Ka.** Even though you have nothing, you want to seem
superior. Since you see that I have been completely persuaded,
give in. **Go.** With that you've convinced me.
I'd be in bad shape twice over — poor and out of my senses —
if I ran away from the one person who shows me the direction to
security.
So. All that's left is to make the betrothals.
Ka. But I betroth, for the bearing of legitimate children,
my daughter, young man, to you, and as a dowry
I give, in addition to her, three talents. **Go.** And I for my part
have a talent as dowry for the other. **Ka.** You
have?
Don't give too much. **Go.** But I have the farm.
Ka. Hold on to the whole thing yourself, Gorgias. Your mother
now, bring her and your sister over
to the women here with us. **Go.** So I must.
So. Tonight we'll stay
here,
and tomorrow we'll have the weddings.
And the old man, Gorgias,
bring him over with you. He's more likely to get the care he needs here
with us. **Go.** He will not wish to, Sostratos.
So. Persuade him. **Go.** If I can. [*exits to Knemon's house*] **So.** We should
have a drink,
dad, now ... a fine one —
and an all-night party for the women. **Ka.** Just the opposite:
they're drinking now and we will party all night long, I'm sure,
ourselves. I'll move along and get something ready for you
two,
something worth the while. **So.** Do that. [*Ka. exits into shrine*] [*So. speaks to audience*] In any business
a man who has good sense shouldn't completely give up ever.
Everything can be gotten with attention and hard work,
everything. I now provide the illustration of this:

in a single day I've brought about a marriage
that absolutely no one ever thought would be.
865
Go. [*enters with mother and sister*] Move quickly now, you two. **So.** This way.
[*speaking into shrine*] Mother, receive these women. [*the women enter the shrine*] Knemon ... not yet?
Go. He was pleading with me to take the old woman outside too,
so he'd be completely alone by himself. **So.** What a character,
can't fight against it. **Go.** That's the way he is. **So.** Good-bye to him.
870
Let's go ourselves. **Go.** Sostratos, I'm too embarrassed ...
women ... in the same — **So.** What's this nonsense? Won't you go ahead?
All in the family, that's the way you should think of these things now. [*both enter shrine together*]

Sim. [*enters from Knemon's house*] I'm going away, by Artemis ... me too. All by yourself,
lie there. Poor you for the way you
are! 875
When these people wanted to bring you to the god
you refused. There will be some big trouble for you again,
by the Two Gods, and bigger than now by far.
Ge. [*enters from shrine toward Gorgias' house*] I'll go over here and see —

(the stage musician plays his pipes)

Why are you piping at me, you miserable person? I still don't have any leisure. 880
They're sending me to the old man who's in bad shape over here. Stop it!
Sim. [*speaking to Getas*] And some one of you should go in and sit beside him.
I'm sending off my young mistress and I want to talk
to her, say good-bye, give her a hug. **Ge.** Good idea. Go
on. 884
I'll take care of him for a while myself. [*Simikhe exits into the shrine*] For a long time now I've decided
to seize this opportunity, but I have to work hard.

(the next two lines are fragmentary to restore)

Cook Sikon, come out here and listen to me. O Poseidon,
What a game I think I've got! **Sik.** You calling me. **Ge.** I
am. 890
Do you want to get even for what you've just undergone?

Sik. I've undergone? Would you screw yourself. You're talking nonsense.
Ge. The grouchy old man is sleeping alone. **Sik.** How is he then?
Ge. Not completely miserable. **Sik.** Couldn't he
stand up and beat us. **Ge.** Couldn't even stand, I
think.
Sik. Such sweet business you're telling me. I'll go in and ask for something:
he'll be out of his mind. **Ge.** Do you know what? What if first
we drag him out and put him here,
and then we knock on the door, we ask for things ... burn him up?
It will be a pleasure, I say. **Sik.** I'm afraid
Gorgias
will catch us and clean our clocks. **Ge.** There's a racket inside.
They're drinking. No one will notice. Absolutely, we've
got to tame this man. We're related to him,
he's family for us. If he's always going to be like this,
it will be work putting up with him. **Sik.** How wouldn't he be. **Ge.** Just
be careful
he doesn't notice you carrying him here out in front of the house. **Sik.** After
you then ...
Wait a second, please. Don't leave me behind and go away.
And don't make any noise, by the gods. **Ge.** I'm not making any noise, by
Ge. [they both exit]

(the piper continues to play until they return carrying Knemon)

Sik. To the right. **Ge.** OK. **Sik.** Put him here. **Ge.** Now's the moment.
Sik. Very well,
I'll go first. [*to piper*] And you watch the
rhythm.
[*knocking on Kn.'s door*] Boy ... little boy ... nice boys ... boy ... little boys.
Kn. I'm dead, poor me.
Sik. Nice boys ... boy ... little boy ... boy ... boys. **Kn.** I'm dead, poor me.
Sik. Who's this? Are you someone from in here? **Kn.** Obviously. What do
you want?
Sik. I'm asking for pots from you people, and a basin. **Kn.** Who would
help me stand up? **Sik.** You have them, you really do have
them.
And seven tripods and twelve tables. But boys,
give this message to the people inside: I'm in a hurry. **Kn.** There's nothing.
Sik. There isn't? **Kn.** You've heard that ten thousand times. **Sik.** I'll run
off now.
Kn. O unlucky me! How did I get carried out
here?

Who put me down in front of the house? Get out of here now, you too.
Ge. Yes indeed.
Ge. Boy ... little boy ... women ... men ... doorman. **Kn.** You're crazy, man. You'll knock down the door. **Ge.** Lend us nine rugs —
Kn. From where? **Ge.** — and a woven Persian drape a hundred feet long. **Kn.** I wish I had
a strap somewhere. Old woman! Where is the old woman? **Ge.** Shall I go to another
door? **Kn.** Get away from here now, both of you. Old woman ... Simikhe. I hope that all the gods destroy you, you pest! What do you want?
Ge. I want to get a large bronze wine-mixing bowl. **Kn.** Who would help me stand up? **Ge.** You have it, you really do have it,
the drape, daddy, you inherited from your dad. **Kn.** Nor the wine bowl either.
I'll kill Simikhe. **Sik.** Sit down and don't even grunt.
You shun the crowd, you hate women, you won't allow us to bring you together with the people who are sacrificing. You will put up with all this.
There's nobody here to help. Gnash your teeth by yourself here.
Listen to it all, one thing after another.

(the rest of this line and the whole of the next are too fragmentary to restore)

When the women from our place came here
there were embraces from your wife and child first of all,
and kisses. The way they spent their time wasn't unpleasant at all.
Off to the side I was preparing a drinking party myself
for the men. These — Do you hear what I'm saying? Don't fall asleep. **Ge.** Don't or else.
Kn. Poor me. **Sik.** Do you want to be there with them? Pay attention to the rest.
It was time for a libation. A couch of leaves and grass was stretched out on the ground. The tables
I myself — for it was right for me to do this — are you listening? —
I happen to be a cook, remember. **Kn.** A real softy.
Sik. And one person was tipping an old gray Bakkhos — an old vintage of wine —
into a hollow vessel, mixing the stream of Nymphs,
and he was offering it to them in a circle, and another did the same for the women —

it was just like you were carrying water to sand — Do you understand this? —
and one of the servant girls, soaked with wine, shaded the flower of her youthful face
and started on a dancing rhythm,
modestly hesitating the same time and trembling,
and another was holding her hand tightly and dancing ...
Ge. Oh you poor man, you've suffered such a terrible thing — dance, get on your feet with us.
Kn. What do you want, you terrible people? **Ge.** No, you get on your feet with us.
You're a country bumpkin. **Kn.** No, by the gods! **Ge.** Then shall we carry you in
now? **Kn.** What will I do? **Ge.** Dance now, you too. **Kn.** Carry me. It's better
perhaps to endure the things in there. **Ge.** You've got some sense. We win.
O fair-victory men! Donax boy, and you Sikon,
lift this man up, carry him inside. [*to Knemon*] Watch out now,
because if we catch you upsetting anything
again, we won't treat you so easily, you can be sure,
next time. But someone give
us crowns and a torch. **Sik.** Take this one.

Ge. [*to audience*] Good! If you are pleased with how we have fought down
this troublesome old man, then with kindly thoughts,
young men, boys, men, applaud.
And may that fair-fathered, smile-loving girl —
Victory — favorably follow us forever.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Pan, the god
[back]
Khaireas (**Kh.**), Sostratos' "gofer"
Sostratos (**So.**), the young man in love
Pyrrhias (**Py.**), a slave in Sostratos' town house
Knemon (**Kn.**), father of Sostratos' beloved, the grouch of the play's title
Girl (**Gi.**), Sostratos' beloved, Knemon's daughter

Daos (**Da.**). Gorgias' slave
Gorgias (**Go.**), half-brother of Sostratos' beloved
Sikon (**Sik.**), a hired cook
Getas (**Ge.**), a slave in Sostratos' country house
Simikhe (**Sim.**), Knemon's slave, an older woman
Kallippides (**Ka.**), Sostratos' father
Mother (**Mo.**), Sostratos' mother

Myrrhine, Gorgias' mother and Knemon's former wife (non-speaking)
Donax, a slave in Kallippides' household (non-speaking)
other slaves and female relatives and friends of Sostratos' mother (non-speaking)
chorus of Pan-worshipers who sing the choral interludes [back]

STAGE SETTING

The stage represents a country road leading from the city of Athens in one direction and further into the countryside on the other. The three openings in the stage's backdrop represent Knemon's farmstead on one side, Gorgias' farmstead on the other, and a shrine of Pan and the Nymphs in the center. The farmsteads are understood as compounds that include a residence, barn, well, etc. Both Knemon and Gorgias work fields offstage reached by the road that runs across the stage. Kallippides' country house also lies offstage along the same road. [back]

NOTES

Attike, the territory of Athens, was divided into 139 districts called "demes." Phyle was one of these, in the hilly northern part of Attike. The play later mentions two other demes, Kholargos and Paiania. [back to Phyle, Kholargos, Paiania]

A *hetaira* was a woman hired by men for companionship at parties. The plots of New Comedy often involve young men falling in love with *hetairai*. [back]

Slaves were regularly call "boy" even when they were quite old, even by people much younger than themselves. [back]

Lines 89-99 are in particularly poor shape, and at various points it is difficult to say what is missing or even who is speaking. [back]

The *stadion* (pl. *stadia*) was a measure of distance, approximately 202 yards. [back]

Perseus, a character from Greek mythology, slew the monster Medusa and cut off her head, the sight of which could turn a person to stone; he also had winged sandals that enabled him to fly. [back]

A *stoa* is a covered porch used as for meetings and other public functions, as well as a shelter to get out of the rain and heat of the sun. Several were built along the sides of the Athenian agora. Leos was one of the "ten Attic heroes" who each had his own statue at a shared shrine in the agora where people frequently gathered, though it is unclear whether Knemon is talking about this or something else. [back]

A female baby from a wealthy family (and those of comedy) was often entrusted to a wet nurse, who then served as her personal servant until she married. [back]

The awkwardness of the translation here reflects the awkwardness of Gorgias' argument in the Greek original. [back]

The talent was a unit of both weight (about 57 lb.) and money (6,000 *drakhmai*). [back]

In a few moments, at the cook's suggestion, Getas will take off the pack he is carrying and lean it against the shrine wall. [back]

Leather jackets were the characteristic attire of working farmers. [back]

Baskets and water were part of the regular equipment for sacrifices. *Thulemata* (pl.) were someting connected with rituals of blood sacrifices (*thu-* is the Greek for such rituals} but exactly what they were in unclear. [back]

Well arm: a long see-saw-like pole whose up-and-down movement lessened the effort of raising water from a well. [back]

A libation was a liquid offering (usually wine) made to a god or gods by pouring it on the table, floor or ground. [back]

Menander apparently uses the *ekkuklema* here, a wheeled platform that was rolled onto the stage to show the audience what was taking place inside the house, in this case the scene of Knemon on a bed surrounded by his daughter and Simikhe. [back]

The *ekkuklema* is rolled back into Knemon's house with Knemon and the women on it. [back]

Kallippides is a "farmer" only in the sense that he own land which he rents to others to farm. A rich man like Kallippides would never work the land himself. [back]

The "Two Gods" are Demeter and her daughter Persephone. [back]

The rest of the play is performed to musical accompaniment on the pipes. The joke here may be that such music usually accompanies a lively scene, and when it starts Getas resents it since it implies that he must move quickly: hence his complaint about lack of leisure. [back]

Translator's note: This translation is based generally on the Greek text of the *Dyskolos* published by F. H. Sandbach in his *Menandri Reliquiae Selectae*, revised edition (Oxford 1990). It departs from the Sandbach's edition where other scholars have provided more convincing restorations and, occasionally, where some creativity was required to provide a readable text. Comments, criticisms, corrections, and suggestions for improvement will be gladly appreciated. [back]

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